

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MADRID 01153 131841Z

43

ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

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INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

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AMEMBASSY ROME

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USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 1153

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT; PFOR, SP

SUBJ: JOAQUIN RUIZ GIMENEZ' MEETING WITH SENATOR PELL

SUMMARY: CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC LEADER RUIZ GIMENEZ DISPLAYED MORE MODERATION, REALISM, AND FLEXIBILITY IN HIS POSITIONS THAN HE HAS ON PRVIOUS OCCASIONS IN BREAKFAST MEETING WITH SENATOR PELL FEB 12.

1. ON FEB 12 SENATOR PELL AND I HAD BREAKFAST AT RESIDENCE WITH CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC (IDC) LEADER JOAQUIN RUIZ GIMENEZ, A FORMER MINISTER OF EDUCATION AND AMB TO THE VATICAN.

2. RUIZ GIMENEZ REITERATED HIS VIEW THAT PCE MUST BE LEGALIZED ALONG WITH ALL OTHER POLITICAL PARTIES. EXCLUSION OF COMMUNISTS WOULD BE EXTREMELY DANGEROUS BECAUSE IT WOULD (A) GIVE ADVANTAGE OF CLANDESTINITY TO PCE; (B) RADICALIZE NOW-MODERATE PSOE SOCIALIST PARTY WHICH THE PCE WOULD SEEK TO INFILTRATE; AND (C) UNNECESSARILY ALIENATE SPAIN'S WORKERS, WHERE PCE INFLUENCE IS ALREADY STRONG. LEGALIZATION OF PCE,
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PAGE 02 MADRID 01153 131841Z

WHICH HE ESTIMATED WOULD ONLY OBTAIN 12 PERCENT OF VOTE IN

A FREE ELECTION, WOULD ALSO HELP TO CREATE A CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC-SOCIALIST ALLIANCE. HE ALSO STATED THAT HE WAS OPPOSED TO ANY POTULAR FRONT WITH PCE. GOVT, HE SAID, WOULD NOT EVEN HAVE TO FACE SPECIFIC ISSUE OF PCE LEGALIZATION, BY GRANTING FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION TO ALL POLITICAL GROUPS. THE PCE COULD ACQUIRE LEGAL STATUS WITHOUT THE MATTER BECOMING A /CAUSE CELEBRE". HE SOMEWHAT SURPRISINGLY, HOWEVER, SAID HE AND HIS GROUP DO PLAN PARTICIPATE IN MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS EVEN IF PCE STILL EXCLUDED.

3. RE SPANISH-US TREATY, RUIZ GIMENEZ SAID IDC AND MOST OF SPANISH OPPOSITION GROUPS HAD ALWAYS OPPOSED OUR BASES AGREE-MENTS. NONETHELESS, NEW SITUATION CHANGED THINGS CONSIDERABLY, MAKING IT POSSIBLE TO VIEW TREATY IN A MORE POSITIVE LIGHT BECAUSE (A) IT HAD BEEN NEGOTIATED AS A TREATY SUBJECT TO RATIFICATION; AND (B) BECAUSE IT WOULD DO AWAY WITH US NUCLEAR PRESENCE ON SPANISH SOIL (HE CITED RECENT CRASH OF A USAF TANKER OUTSIDE GUADALAJARA AND FAMOUS PALOMARES MID-AIR COLLISION OF H-BOMB CARRYING AIRCRAFT A DECADE AGO AS EXAMPLES OF WHY SPANISH PUBLIC HAS BEEN OPPOSED TO US NUCLEAR PRESENCE). RUIZ GIMENEZ ALSO APPEARED PLEASED BY SENATOR PELL'S INTIMATION THAT US SENATE RATIFICATION OF TREATY WOULD BE CONDITIONED SOMEWHAT TO THE DEMOCRATIZATION PROCESS IN SPAIN. SOMEWHAT SURPRISINGLY, RUIZ GIMENEZ ADMITTED THAT HE RECOGNIZED THE NECESSITY FOR THE CONTINUED PRESENCE OF US FORCES IN SPAIN AS PART OF THE WESTERN DEFENSE SYSTEM.

4. WHEN ASKED ABOUT STATUS OF NEGOTIATIONS OF PCE-MANIPULATED "JUNTA DEMOCRATICA" WITH MODERATE "PLATAFORMA DE COPVERGENCIA DEMOCRATICA" COALITION, RUIZ GIMENEZ REPLIED THERE IS A LIAISON COMMITTEE WHICH MEETS REGULARLY AND THAT TWO COALITIONS HAVE COME OUT FROM TIME TO TIME WITH JOINT STATEMENTS SUCH AS THE LATEST ONE CONDEMNING ARIAS' JAN 28 CORTES SPEECH. THERE HAS BEEN NO REAL PROGRESS ON A POSSIBLE MERGER, PARTICULARLY DUE TO THE ATTITUDE OF THE PSOE. IF GOVT MOVED RAPIDLY TOWARD DEMOCRATIZATION, PROSPECTS FOR A MERGER WOULD RECEDE. BUT IF GOVT MOVED TOO SLOWLY OR EVEN BEGAN TO BACKTRACK, THEN PROSPECTS FOR "JUNTA-CONVERGENCIA" MERGER WOULD BE CONSIDERABLY ENHANCED.

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PAGE 03 MADRID 01153 131841Z

5. RUIZ GIMENEZ COMMENTED SOMEWHAT FAVORABLY ON NEW GOVT, PARTICULARLY LAUDING FRAGA, AREILZA, GARRIGUES AND OSORIO. HE FELT, HOWEVER, THAT GOVT WOULD HAVE TO MOVE FASTER AND WITH CONCRETE MEASURES TO IMPLEMENT DEMOCRATIC REFORMS; OTHERWISE HE FEARED THAT STILL-POWERFUL REACTIONARY ELEMENT IN THE ESTABLISHMENT MIGHT GET THE UPPER HAND. HE CRITICIZED ARIAS' JAN 28 CORTES SPEECH, HOWEVER, AS A DISASTER. RUIZ GIMENEZ RATHER SIGNIFICANTLY ALTERED HIS USUAL LINE IN FAVOR OF A

"DEMOCRATIC RUPTURE" AND CONSTITUENT PROCESS, CLAIMING THAT DESPITE THE OPPOSITION'S PUBLIC INSISTENCE ON A "RUPTURE" NONE OF THE NONCOMMUNIST OPPOSITION GROUPS ARE GOING TO REALLY OBJECT IF GOVT SINCERELY MOVES FORWARD WITH RAPID DEMOCRATIC REFORMS.

6. ASKED ABOUT PROSPECTS FOR SPANISH CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC UNITY, HE REPLIED THAT CLOSE COOPERATION ALREADY EXISTED BETWEEN 5 OPPOSITION CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC GROUPS IN "EQUIPO." MORE SURPRISINGLY, RUIZ GIMENEZ ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THERE MAY BE A POSSIBILITY OF A RAPPROCHEMENT WITH REGIME CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS SUCH AS SILVA MUNOZ' UDE. HE AND SOME OF HIS FOLLOWERS WERE SCHEDULED TO ATTEND A DINNER WITH SILVA THE SAME DAY AND SOMETHING MIGHT STEM FROM THIS DINNER MEETING.

7. COMMENT: MOST NOTEWORTHY ASPECT OF THIS CONVERSATION WAS RUIZ GIMENEZ' MORE MODERATE AND FLEXIBLE POSITIONS ON SUCH ISSUES AS LEGALIZATION OF PCE, PRESENCE OF OUR BASES IN SPAIN, QUESTION OF "DEMOCRATIC RUPTURE," AND HIS ATTITUDE TOWARD NEW GOVT.
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